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ABSTRACT

Existing and potential federal funding programs for libraries are discussed in this special conference theme summary. The relation of library funding to the total intergovernmental grant system is explained, and eight existing federal programs are outlined that support (1) public library services, (2) interlibrary cooperation, (3) school libraries and instructional resources, (4) college library resources, (5) career training, (6) research and demonstration, (7) strengthening research libraries, and (8) college instructional equipment. Suggestions for alternative models of federal support include a revised federal role and target in funding, modification of existing funding mechanisms, and a new legislative initiative. Five references are listed. (SW)

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White House Conference on Library and Information Services

Pre-Conference Meetings on Special Themes

June 8-9 and September 14, 1978

Federal Funding Alternatives

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INTRODUCTION

This Nation has vast resources in its national, public, academic, school, and special libraries. It has burgeoning public and private information services supporting a widening scope of essential human activities in government, the professions, commerce, education, and cultural development. Both public and private investment in information services and information technology is increasing exponentially. Vast amounts of Federal, State and local governmental and private funds are being spent in supporting wide-ranging library and information service enterprises. There is today, however, no fiscal policy or program that represents a rational, strategic Federal support position for the development and effective utilization of library and information services over the next 10 years. That is the heart of the problem that NCLIS faces in developing a national program.

Adoption of a process for continuing consideration of the issue of Federal funding support, rather than proposal of a single, definitive model, is tacit recognition of: the special characteristics and developmental status of the library and information agencies and services; and the degree of turbulence that is affecting intergovernmental fiscal affairs. The library and information service community is disparate, autonomous in its constituent parts, and has widely varying views as to how its generic services should be financed. Part of it is aware of the changing needs of an information-demanding society and the nationwide network essential to serve adequately such needs. Part of it is as yet unresponsive, passive, and even skeptical of the need for governmental intervention at any level. The turbulence that characterizes the current intergovernmental fiscal scene has persisted over the past several years and will undoubtedly continue until significant rearrangements are completed. In this kind of setting it would be hazardous, if not foolhardy, to propose a single prescription for resolving the issue of Federal funding.

The process began in the spring of 1978 and will continue through the White House Conference on Library and Information Services to be held in November 1979. Essentially, the process is an effort to coalesce and bring to bear on this issue the several constituencies that represent both the library and information service community and, most importantly, general observers and policymakers with knowledge and responsibilities covering intergovernmental fiscal affairs. The process focuses on developing considered and reasoned answers to the following basic questions:

- Realistically, what is the optimal nature and pattern for the Federal fiscal support of libraries and information services over the near (5-10 years) future?
- What actions, plans, or strategies should NCLIS and the library community undertake now to influence possible emerging or needed change in the nature and pattern of Federal funding?

The process encompasses the following basic activities:

- Preparation of a working draft of a paper outlining prospects, possibilities, and alternatives (completed May 1978).
- Submission of the paper for review and consideration of a special conference of representatives of the library and information service community (conference held June 8 and 9, 1978, in Arlington, Virginia).
- Revision and submission of the paper for review and consideration of a special conference of general observers and policymakers outside of the library and information service community (conference held September 14, 1978, in Washington, D.C.).
- Revision, publication, and submission of the paper to library and information agencies, officials, and citizens for review and consideration in preparation for the White House Conference.
- Submission of the paper for review and consideration by White House Conference delegates. This consideration, it is hoped, will lead to recognition of a consensus supporting, in broad form, one of the alternative models outlined here or a new alternative developed as an outgrowth of White House Conference discussions.
- Preparation of draft legislation and policy guidelines for consideration by Congress and the President.
- Preparation by Federal, State, and local library agencies and officials for the support and early implementation of the legislation.

The two workshop conferences held in June and September 1978 are worthy of note. A total of 47 persons representing a variety of agencies and policymaking positions within and external to the library field participated. Distinctions between the two sets of conference participants are immediately apparent. The June conference participants represented various components of the library and information science community. The September conference group consisted primarily of important Federal observers and public officials who are outside the library and information field. The agendas for the two conferences were identified, and they focused on the two discussion questions stated earlier. Participants were sent advance copies of the working draft of the paper as background information. Highlights of the paper were presented as an opening agenda item. Small-group sessions were organized for more detailed review and discussion of four alternative models outlined in the paper. Forms to assist in considering and rating alternatives

were developed for conference use. It was stressed that the paper was presented as a background document, that none of the alternatives represented the view of NCLIS because it has not yet taken a position, and that the participants themselves need not feel committed to any particular viewpoint represented in the paper or any viewpoint that might emerge from the conference. Participants were asked only to give their best counsel and judgment on the best and most realistic course to follow in seeking development of a rational and strategic Federal role, policy, and support system appropriate to a national program of library and information services.

However, several important general conclusions can be drawn from conference deliberations.

- There were differences of views among participants as to the specific kind of Federal support program that might (or should) emerge. There was, however, no question raised as to the legitimacy or appropriateness of some kind of Federal funding role. There was also a broad consensus that the developmental status of libraries and information services requires and makes appropriate an early revision of Federal laws and policies governing funding.
- There was a clear emphasis, established primarily by information science leaders and technologists, that any Federal legal and policy base developed for providing fiscal support should be broad enough to take into account the primary information-generating and information-processing activities of the Federal government and the services provided by the national libraries.
- The four models presented in the paper seemed to cover a range of choices that are adequate to reflect all, or most of the views of conference participants.
- Of the four models presented, there was more interest in and a wider acceptance of a modified block-grant approach as a general design for the future Federal funding of libraries and information services. It was recognized, however, that the model was described in very general terms and that further delineation of this approach must precede any attempt to draft a more detailed legislative and policy base.
- There was some indication by general participants (those whose expertise lies outside the fields of library and information service) that bold, new legislative and policy approaches should be seriously considered, if indeed a reading of the developmental status of the field warranted such approaches.

The purpose of this report, then, is to provide a context for the continuing discussion of the central questions stated earlier. The alternative models presented are not described in detail or in definitive terms. None is proposed as the recommended views of NCLIS because, as indicated earlier, the Commission as yet has neither considered the alternatives nor taken a position in favor of any model and does not intend to do so until after the White House Conference. Rather, they are intended to guide and to stimulate further consideration and discussion by library and information service associations, general observers and policymakers, participants in State preparatory conferences, and delegates to the White House Conference. The objective of this process is to facilitate development of an optimal model—one with the widest possible base of support—for later consideration by Congress and the President.

LOCAL LIBRARY RESOURCES AND FUNDING PROGRAMS

According to a 1975 inventory prepared for NCLIS, the Nation is served by nearly 86,000 public, school, and academic libraries, which are staffed by some 121,500 professional librarians. The inventory excluded the sizeable number of special and governmental libraries. The great proportion (87 percent) of libraries included in the inventory are elementary and secondary school libraries.

At present, the Federal Government contributes to the support of these 86,000 libraries through three separate acts: the Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA) for public libraries; the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) for school libraries; and the Higher Education Act (HEA) for academic libraries. Some Federal funds also reach local libraries through the general revenue-sharing program.

In assessing prospects, possibilities, and alternatives for the future Federal support of libraries, this report: examines the present climate of intergovernmental fiscal and functional relationships as they might affect the funding of libraries; appraises the composition, strengths, and weaknesses of the present Federal library funding programs; and presents possible alternative models through which varying Federal fiscal roles could be implemented. The Federal library funding programs that are examined are:

- LSCA, Title I: Public Library Services
- LSCA, Title III: Interlibrary Cooperation
- ESEA, Title IV-B: School Libraries and Instructional Resources
- HEA, Title II-A: College Library Resources
- HEA, Title II-B: Career Training
- HEA, Title II-B: Research and Demonstration
- HEA, Title II-C: Strengthening Research Libraries
- HEA, Title VI-A: College Instructional Equipment

LIBRARY FUNDING IN RELATION TO THE TOTAL INTERGOVERNMENTAL GRANT SYSTEM

There are three basic kinds of support mechanisms in the Federal grant-in-aid system: categorical grants, block grants, and general revenue sharing. Library support is provided primarily through categorical grants. The Federal role and funding of libraries, as a direct object of grants, began with the Library Services Act of 1956. That role was broadened and reinstated as the Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA) in 1964 and 1966. LSCA was reenacted and extended for five years in 1970 and again in 1977 in unchanged form, except for the addition of a very limited, and as yet unfunded, program to provide special fiscal support for urban libraries. The proposed austerity and contraction in the Federal funding of libraries is due, in part, to a variety of factors related to limitations in the design and scope of these programs, but it is also due to broader changes in the intergovernmental fiscal scene.

Today's intergovernmental fiscal climate has indicated the existence of a high level of concern and considerable discontent with the existing Federal grant system. The central focus of the criticism has been on the tremendous increase in Federal dollars, the impact of Federal funds on the pattern of State and local expenditures, the decisionmaking processes controlling those expenditures, and the administrative complexities that are an integral part of the present system.

The specific target of most of these criticisms is the categorical grant, which, along with block grants and general revenue sharing, constitute the Federal grant-in-aid system. Categorical grants are Federal funds directed exclusively toward a specific program or service that is defined, usually quite specifically, in the legislation. All of the Federal grant programs in support of library services are classified as categorical.

The block grant is directed to general purpose governments in accordance with a statutory formula for use in a variety of activities within a broad functional program at the discretion of the local government. General revenue sharing is the distribution of funds according to a formula with few or no limits on the purposes or objects of the expenditures.

The implications for change from the current (and continuing) intergovernmental fiscal climate are clear. The general tendency to consolidate categorical aid programs will continue. This does not mean that all Federal categorical aid programs are inappropriate or that all should be eliminated or consolidated. It does mean that the burden of justifying particular categorical aid programs, such as those in support of libraries, becomes heavier and must be faced directly. It also means that aid programs that are difficult to administer and those that are not fully effective will be examined closely. In the next section of this report, the several aid programs that now support libraries are examined.

EXISTING FEDERAL PROGRAMS THAT SUPPORT LIBRARIES

Library Services and Construction Act, Title I: Public Library Services

The general conclusion of a 1976 study sponsored by NCLIS was that the Federal funding effort under LSCA has been only moderately effective in ensuring the development of public library services that are adequate to meet present and future needs throughout the Nation. The report notes that much has been accomplished under the existing program to sustain and to develop the public library as a community-based information and educational institution. It also should be noted that LSCA was never designed in response to the presently felt need for a national network of information and library services. However, major gaps both in rural and in urban areas still exist and a disproportionately heavy burden of fiscal support is carried by local government. The analysis included an examination of whether libraries were receiving a significant amount of additional funds from general revenue sharing. The answer was demonstrably negative.

The overall conclusion that the LSCA Title I program has been only moderately effective should not be used to obliterate some positive accomplishments. On the positive side:

- There are some 9,000 to 10,000 public library units providing a wide range of library and information services.
- Total expenditures for these services exceeded the \$1 billion mark in 1975, reflecting nearly a one-third increase over 1972.
- States have increased, modestly, at least, their share of local public library expenditures.
- Local jurisdictions, although hit hard by rising costs and tax ceilings, have continued to support the major share (85 percent or more) of public library costs.
- Under the stimulus of the matching and planning requirements, States have moved to strengthen their library support and administrative structures.

Library Services and Construction Act, Title III: Interlibrary Cooperation

A study prepared for the Office of Planning, Budgeting and Evaluation, U.S. Office of Education (USOE), has produced findings generally more positive for this title, as opposed to Title I (Patrick, et. al. 1979). The general conclusions can be summarized as follows:

- LSCA Title III has affected the development and expansion of library cooperation in a number of ways. LSCA Title III

is a major driving force behind the development of multitype library cooperation and networking, primarily at the State level. Along with LSCA Title I, use of LSCA Title III has resulted in greater centralization of planning and administration of library services at the State and regional levels. LSCA Title III was credited as a major influence on State legislatures to modify or to pass into law legislation favoring cooperation and networking.

- The State library agencies credited LSCA Title III with providing the impetus for participation in intrastate and multistate cooperatives/networks and for increased use of telecommunications. More than 76 percent of the States actively participated in intrastate and multistate library networks in 1976. Over 63 percent of the States were able to install or to upgrade telecommunications linkages among public, academic, and special libraries.

The evaluative results of this study are not all positive, however. A very serious weakness is the low level of funding of the program. Other deficiencies included:

- LSCA Title III is used to provide support for programs already integrated into the States' basic programs of library services.
- Eighty-five percent of projects receiving Title III funds were ongoing and not new or experimental projects.
- Many projects funded by this means were restricted in the range of cooperative and networking services they supported. Interlibrary loan and referral services, for example, tended to be oversupported to the detriment of the development of new forms of cooperation and networking.
- Dissemination of information about networking is very superficial, and there are no systematic efforts to share information among the States.

Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Title IV-B: School Libraries and Instructional Resources

This is the largest in the array of library support programs. An early evaluation of the program was prepared in 1972 by USOE staff. The report stated that the program was effective in attaining legislative goals but that the program fell short of meeting needs. A current study of ESEA Title IV is being done for USOE by the Rand Corporation. While this study focuses on implementation issues and research questions, it provides some information that is helpful in assessing Title IV. The following notes are extracted and adapted from the study's working papers, prepared by Rand Corporation in 1978.

- ESEA Title IV was the first major consolidation of Federal education programs and as such raises questions both about how the Act has been implemented and about the effectiveness of consolidation as a Federal strategy.
- The consolidation was an exercise in political expediency rather than administrative feasibility. Many of the programs that were consolidated lack a common focus or purpose.
- USOE's efforts to implement Title IV have been hampered by a lack of clarity in congressional intent. For example, at the time Title IV was authorized, Congress also created an Office of Libraries and Learning Resources (OLLR) within USOE. Two years later, in the Education Amendments of 1976, Congress authorized an administrative unit in USOE to coordinate all guidance and counseling programs. Yet, Title IV-B was designed to be a consolidated library and guidance program.
- In the simplest terms, this means that there is no real administrative consolidation of Title IV at the Federal level. Not only have the procedures adopted by Federal staff to coordinate the administration not consolidated program operations, but they have actually added unnecessary costs to administration of Title IV.

Higher Education Act, Title II-A: College Library Resources

This program, which began in 1966, involves three types of grants. Although some observers defend these grants, the Administration seeks termination of the program in 1979 on the grounds that the grants are marginal and that they are made without regard to need.

Higher Education Act, Title II-B: Career Training

A USOE-sponsored evaluation in 1970 of the Title II-B program concluded that in terms of degree completion, postprogram employment, and subjective evaluation by academics, the program is successful. (Reed 1975) From the outset, however, there was overlap between the Title II-B program and training programs that are available under the Vocational Education Act of 1963. In 1970 the U.S. Commissioner of Education requested zero funding for Title II-B because it duplicated other authority. The Administration is seeking to terminate the program for fiscal year 1979 and states that the supply of and demand for librarians is now in equilibrium. Other observers dispute this view and cite the demand for minority libraries, community outreach librarians, media specialists, and library automation specialists.

Higher Education Act, Title II-B: Research and Demonstration

This program was enacted by Congress in 1965 to provide discretionary grants to support research and demonstration in the fields of library and information science. A general conclusion as to the program's impact is:

The HEA II-B Library Research and Demonstration Program has had a significant impact upon the library and information community merely by virtue of its existence. Several projects have been successful locally, and a few have had national impact, such as the series of projects that contributed to the development and improvement of the Ohio College Library Center (OCLC). (Patrick, et. al. 1979)

On the face of it, this conclusion reflects a rather constrained finding of success. Some deficiencies were: lack of a cohesive national plan of program direction; lack of adequate dissemination of program results at the national level; and lack of adequate funding.

Higher Education Act, Title II-C: Strengthening Research Libraries

This program is just now (1978) being funded for the first time.

Higher Education Act, Title IV-A: College Instructional Equipment

Evaluative information on the impact of this program is not readily available. The reason given for the Administration's request for termination was that "...awarding so many small grants make for inefficient and ineffective use of Federal funds."

In summary, these various evaluations of existing support programs produced a mixed bag of reactions. Ratings of unqualified success were not in evidence and there was some lack of "hard data" to support precisely stated rating measurements.

The objectives and goals of the existing Federal fiscal support laws are neither an adequate nor appropriate base for the task of meeting the Nation's library and information services needs. A huge gap exists between the present legislative base for Federal funding of local libraries and a national program based on the broad concept of an information-transfer chain and the expanded role that might be played by the existing national libraries. The existence of the gap does not, of itself, suggest that any of the existing programs should be discarded or revised separately. What is clear is that the disparate nature and low funding levels of the present Federal funding programs supporting local libraries does not represent, conceptually or legislatively, anything like an integrated national program.

All existing library and information resources are components of the national program concept. This conclusion is not intended to validate the present Federal role or mechanisms or to suggest the scope and nature of any new Federal role. The conclusion does make clear, however, that adequate support of the public, school, academic, and research libraries — presently the objects of the Federal support program — is essential to the national program.

ALTERNATIVE MODELS OF FEDERAL SUPPORT

There seem to be a number of different models of Federal support programs that can be considered for near future development and adoption. Such models can be designated as follows:

- status quo,
- a revised Federal role as proposed in Senate Bill 3944 (1974),
- modifying the existing funding mechanisms within the framework of a categorical approach, and
- A modified block-grant approach focused on a national program of libraries and information services.

In the following examination of each of these models, the intent is not to be definitive or to suggest a final version. The discussion is intended to stimulate further analysis, revision, and refinement of any of these models over the next year or so. Certainly, such discussion should be considered an important part of the forthcoming White House Conference agenda. The timing is fortuitous. The 1977 version of LSCA is scheduled for termination in 1982. Lead time is required, under most of the model options identified, for further delineation and research and for developing the necessary policy and legislative instruments.

Status Quo

It can be argued that library and information services exist basically as a set of free-standing, autonomous components, and that any attempt by the Federal Government to provide fiscal incentives for operational linkages, beyond those achievable through the existing categorical programs, is doomed to failure. Further, observers might point out that the various Federal support programs have been effective in raising service levels and strengthening existing institutions and services, but that more time is required for further strengthening under the existing system before change can be made. It might also be argued that the ideas of a national program and network are, as yet, visionary and difficult to sell to Congress and to the Administration. It is a lot safer and more effective in the long run to keep things as they are and to concentrate on building and maintaining congressional support for established programs that are functioning fairly well.

Those in favor of change at the earliest possible moment might read the present situation quite differently. They might note that, both substantively and strategically, the need for revision of the existing patchwork of uncoordinated Federal support programs is unmistakable. Strategically, they would doubtless point out that the existing set of programs are extremely vulnerable. Successive administrations, including the current one, have attempted to terminate important components of the program, and it is only a matter of time until such efforts will succeed. These observers would cite

the current turbulence in the intergovernmental fiscal scene and the continuing effort to consolidate categorical grant programs as further evidence of the wisdom of change.

A Revised Federal Role as Proposed in Senate Bill 3944

Senate bill 3944, called the "Library Partnership Act," was introduced in 1974 at the Administration's request. Although the measure never reached the floor of the Senate, it did represent a significant departure from existing library legislation and should be considered as an alternative approach. The bill's development and introduction can be cited as evidence of the need to seek a different direction for library funding. The bill provided the following elements of a Federal support program:

- Discretionary grants to be awarded by the Secretary of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) for the demonstration of innovative library services to the handicapped, institutionalized, and the economically disadvantaged; for the demonstration of means to integrate informational and educational services and for planning activities authorized under the Act.
- Eligible recipients of such grants could include State and local library agencies; public and nonprofit organizations and institutions.
- The State library administrative agency was not designated the official recipient of the funds, but it was granted authority for review and comment.
- Funding for any given project was to be prorated with Federal financial assistance covering up to 100 percent in the first fiscal year, not to exceed 40 percent in the third fiscal year.
- The Secretary of HEW was to be held responsible for establishing criteria for the approval of grants. (NCLIS 1976)

Those who favor this approach would argue that such legislation appropriately diverts Federal funds from institutional support for public, school, and academic libraries in favor of targeted groups with special needs. This change, it would be argued, is in keeping with a proper Federal role. Further, the bill would make provision for interlibrary and/or interinstitutional arrangements, leading to a close alliance between the information services of libraries and the provision of public education. The demonstration aspect of the bill, with discretion exercised by the Secretary of HEW, would provide tight controls, a better return on Federal dollars, and high quality research and planning assistance for all components of the library and information service community.

Those who oppose the bill would argue that it represents a significant downgrading and retrenchment of the Federal fiscal role under the guise of a

new partnership. Federal intergovernmental observers might also suggest that, apart from reducing the Federal funding (which they might view as a positive achievement), the bill has little to commend it. It is still a categorical grant program that is funded at a rather high level—given its objective of demonstration and the exclusive control over what is to be funded in the hands of the Secretary of HEW. Such critics would perhaps emphasize that the bill's provision for completely discretionary funding does not permit any State, local, and private input on what kind of demonstrations should be funded.

Those who are concerned about strengthening the State library agency as the proper administrative, planning, and funding unit for these services would argue that bill effectively bypasses the State in funding and, thus, downgrades the role of the State. This, they might add, is hardly a desirable partnership between the State and the Federal government in any new national program.

Modification of the Existing Funding Mechanisms

Those observers who are convinced of the need for moderate change in Federal support of libraries and information services might take the position that the best course of action now is to revise and to strengthen the existing funding programs and mechanisms within the framework of the categorical approach. They would argue that, while it is sound to push for a consolidation of categoricals as a matter of national intergovernmental policy, the particular need in Federal funding for libraries and information services is for close and continuing Federal involvement and a targeted funding approach that is focused on the staged development of a national program.

After all, they could contend, the weaknesses and deficiencies of the present funding programs are well known and can be corrected by using recommendations now on hand. While this approach of strengthening existing funding programs might satisfy those who seek moderate change and, perhaps, even some of the general critics of Federal library funding, others would be expected to oppose such a course of action. Some would argue that it goes too far and others would complain that it does not go far enough. Perhaps the severest critics of this general approach—those who emphasize the need for closer funding and planning base linkages between school and all other library funding programs—would argue that it does nothing to bridge that gap and that a national program concept is not feasible unless such linkage is clearly established. Other critics might protest the possible reorganization and augmenting of Federal authority that this approach might entail.

A New Legislative Initiative

The final alternative that seems possible to consider is a new legislative initiative reflecting the comprehensive scope and primary emphasis required to assist the development of a national library and information services program. Such legislation might carry the name "The National Library and Information Services Development Act," and it should be formulated to cover

not less than 10 years, with legislative emphasis on the progressive development and coordinated growth of the national program. A review and evaluation should be undertaken in 10 years, with consideration of new directions for the succeeding decade.

The proposed Act could consist of two basic titles, with as many subordinate subtitles as are required. The Act would include specific program goals and would respond to national needs that are more encompassing than the sum of the individual program needs. The Act would define the means for providing information through a nationwide network. Title I, which might be labeled "Development and Coordination of National Library and Information Service Resources," would define and provide for the coordination of a national library and information services network in the context of a national program. A specific outline detailing the provisions of this title would require intensive additional research, which is beyond the scope of this paper. In the context of this option, however, it is clear that development of a national program and the coordination of national library and information services with that end in view requires a legislative base broader than any which now exists at the Federal level. It is also clear that this title of the proposed new Act would deal exclusively with those components of a national program for which the Federal Government would exercise exclusive discretion and authority. Some possible components could be: the support of key national resources — the major research libraries — so that they can meet national objectives as well as institutional goals; the creation of national and/or regional periodicals centers; the maintenance of adequate bibliographic control apparatus, including support of MARC, online bibliographic services; the development of an adequate communication system for the nationwide network; education of staff required to ensure the development of a cost-effective nationwide network; and research in library and information science.

Title II, which might be called "State and Local Library and Information Services Support Program," would represent an approach under which all of the existing Federal funding programs described earlier would be consolidated into a block-grant. Although this title would authorize and provide guidelines for distribution of Federal funds in support of public, academic, and school libraries and information services, considerably more decisionmaking discretion would be allocated to the State. This decentralization of the decisionmaking function is in keeping with a block-grant funding approach.

Appropriate subtitles covering important components of this block-grant could be established, and amounts of Federal funds could be assigned to each. Examples of such titles might include:

- Subtitle A: Resource Development
 - Rural (all libraries and information services)
 - Urban (all libraries and information services)
- Subtitle B: Special Services Development
- Subtitle C: Network and Interlibrary Cooperation at the State Level

Allocations available to States under these various titles could be determined on the basis of need, tax-base capacity, and State-local tax effort. The guiding principle underlying the distributional mechanism should be parity of State and regional resources and equity of access to all resources included in the national network.

Distribution of Federal funds would be through the appropriate State library and information service agency. A requirement could be that each State must reorganize and expand its library advisory or administrative board into a single library and information services board, with responsibility and authority commensurate with the scope of the Federal Act. The Act could require the completion, submittal, and approval of a comprehensive State plan as a prerequisite to receipt of block-grant funds; or it could specify development of a State plan prepared in accordance with Federal guidelines, but without a direct tie-in to the funding. In both cases, the State plan required would be an integrated, comprehensive planning design for development of the State component of a national library and information service program and network. Expenditure of Federal funds would be in accordance with the State plan, with Federal monitoring and fiscal sanctions to make certain that it happens. Another option could provide for a gradual reduction of Federal funding, over a stated time, down to a level that reflects a continuing Federal responsibility for those national network services and activities that transcend State boundaries.

Those who favor this option would perhaps maintain that the block-grant approach represents the best of all possible worlds and permits the kind of reshaping of goals and priorities that is essential if we are ever to transform the present melange of library and information services into any kind of a coherent national program. Some observers might emphasize that in a national program context, the block-grant approach can provide effective funding appropriate to the specific kind of library service provided ranging from public library services to academic and research libraries to resource libraries, capable of serving national needs. Other observers would also argue the worth of sharing with the States the kind of decisionmaking and leadership roles that are essential to achieve national program goals. Some might hint at less than full accord because of the obvious constraints on State and local decisionmaking. Others, however, might agree that, given the appropriate Federal interest in the development of a national program and network, a modified block-grant approach with some Federal strings attached is justified.

Those opposed might argue that it is impossible to assume that a national program can emerge from such a legislative formulation. On theoretical grounds, they could maintain that if the image of a nicely articulated national network is visionary now at the Federal level, it will be made less clear by the separate formulations by each of the States. On practical grounds, they might applaud the objective of requiring an integrated planning effort

including all components of the library and information service community, but they would maintain that it just won't happen. Further, they might argue that regardless of what kind of umbrella legislation or block-grant approach is used, nothing will dislodge the funding priorities now established in existing programs.

Finally, such critics could maintain that development of the guidelines for such a program, along with the planning, administration, and fiscal control and monitoring involved, would require an expanded and reorganized Federal Government agency; that the reorganization and creation of a Federal unit for administering huge amounts of money and a national development program is an exercise fraught with difficulties.

The preceding description of alternative Federal funding models is not intended to be definitive or necessarily comprehensive. The objective was to identify, characterize, and indicate possible advantages and disadvantages for a range of approaches that might reflect a spectrum of different viewpoints. Other models, or some combination of different models, could be suggested. The goal here is to assist the process of determining the most appropriate and effective method for the Federal funding of libraries and information services for future years.

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